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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Education and Party Control in a Rural Area near Canton

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2. Village Schools: As can be observed in the Kucheng group of villages and small towns in the District of Hsinhui [Sanwui] in Kwangtung Province, several new trends are easily observable:

- a. Merger of village schools: Before November 1949, each village had an elementary school, and some of the small towns in the area sometimes had more than one, especially if the population belonged to two or more clans (ie, had two family names among them). In other words each rural school was strictly a "clan" school, with all or nearly all the pupils bearing one family name, and with its financial support guaranteed by the clan organization plus provincial government subsidies.

The first order given by the Communist Party affecting rural education was to merge each two schools into one. The reasons given were:

- (1) economy;
(2) better inter-village friendliness. According to Party policy, the order was to be carried out first between villages which had been periodically engaged in feuds. The principalship was to alternate between the two villages at three year intervals and the vacated school buildings in the less populated village were to be used by the Party for headquarters;

- b. New qualifications for school principals:

- (1) not over 30 years of age;
(2) familiarity with Communist doctrines (Party membership not yet a requirement).

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The result was:

- (1) parents were shocked to see former principals demoted and taking orders from former pupils who were less educated;
- (2) parents were skeptical about the new policy but could do nothing about it.

c. New curriculum:

- (1) Party doctrines were given first priority
- (2) Shorter school hours
- (3) Service to community -- chiefly serving party leaders at headquarters or at home, such as drawing water, splitting firewood, house cleaning, etc.

The class struggle spirit was easily aroused and justified. The own children were frequently bullied by older boys and discriminated against as 'Wei-chü-chai' (landlord's children).

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d. New textbooks:

He was impressed with the enormous use of USSR materials -- Stories of Peter the Great, Lenin, and Stalin; description of the happy life of Soviet children, etc.

3. Secondary Education: There were no full-fledged middle schools [i.e., high schools] in the Kucheng area. Elementary school graduates who wanted to go on but who could not afford to go as far as Canton attended high schools either in the District Seat /Hsinhui Ch'eng/ or in Kungmoon. Such students were reduced to about 50% of the pre-1949 number. As a rule, parents were afraid of status promotion, and the sending of their children away from home to high school was tantamount to admission of being rich. Thus a "well-to-do middle farmer" would rather see his son leave school than himself be reclassified as a "rich farmer" or "landlord."

The local party bosses seemed to be aware of this and began planning in 1952 to build a local high school for the Kucheng area.

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